

## Holy Spirit

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"The Spirit is the principal agent of the new evangelization," the pontiff stated in his 1994 apostolic letter, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* ("As the Third Millennium Draws Near").

"Hence, it will be important to gain a renewed appreciation of the Spirit as one who builds the kingdom of God within the course of history and prepares its full manifestation in Jesus Christ, stirring people's hearts and quickening in our world the seeds of the full salvation which will come at the end of time," the pope continued.

In accordance with the pope's wishes, the diocesan Department of Evangelization and Catechesis has incorporated the Holy Spirit theme into workshops and other gatherings of catechetical leaders in 1998, according to Karen Rinefierd, diocesan coordinator of young adult, adult and family faith formation.

### Take a deep breath

Deep reflection on the Holy Spirit may help create a better understanding of what is, perhaps, the most difficult part of the Trinity to comprehend, according to Father Laird.

"In Jesus we can point to the historical person who existed in Nazareth and Capernaum. In God the Father Creator, we can look at creation and sense that is evidence of the godhead. But the Spirit tends to be far more elusive, and that's why we need to reflect more. It's the one of which we have the least consciousness," said Father Laird, who gave a presentation on the Holy Spirit in Scripture, theology and liturgy at a workshop for catechists April 25 at St. Vincent DePaul Church.

Father Stan Kacprzak said he wrote an essay on the Holy Spirit in the early 1980s while studying in Rome for the priesthood. In the essay, he noted the Spirit as frequently taking a subordinate role in west-

ern Catholicism — a role in which the Spirit "is overshadowed and takes third place" within the Trinity.

"I think there needs to be a more balanced view," said Father Kacprzak, who serves as pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Church in Greece. He is also spiritual director for the diocesan Charismatic Renewal liaison team.

"The Holy Spirit is the forgotten person in the Trinity," agreed Father Robert Kennedy, assistant professor at St. Bernard's Institute.

Although the Trinity comprises "three persons in one God," Father Laird suggested that the Holy Spirit not be visualized in a human sense.

"How you could put spirit in form? If we take spirit or breath or wind in their elemental sense, how can you see the spirit?" Father Laird commented. "Literally, the Holy Spirit is how God is involved in our lives."

Instead, Father Laird said, the Spirit might be perceived as God breathing into us, as described in Genesis 2:7 when "the Lord God formed man out of clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being"; or in John 20:21-22, when Jesus appeared to his disciples after his death, breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

It was with this perception in mind, Father Kennedy noted, that he decided to title an upcoming presentation "Breathing with God." His talk will keynote the annual May Day celebration for diocesan catechetical leaders and youth ministers May 20 at Belhurst Castle in Geneva.

Father Kennedy suggested that if we breathe the Holy Spirit, so to speak, we can "extend the work of Christ in the world."

"As I understand the Spirit, it is at work in all the experiences in our life. The Holy Spirit can be touched and seen as the spirit in people's lives, living in good relationships. It's a care-giver, a comforter," Father

Kennedy said.

Father Laird said that the Acts of the Apostles contain several examples of the Spirit moving through people. "The Acts have been called the 'Gospel of the Holy Spirit,'" he said.

Indeed, when Pentecost Sunday is celebrated May 31, Catholics will reflect upon the second chapter of Acts when the Apostles "were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim."

Dave Valone, of the Charismatic Renewal liaison team, said that without the Holy Spirit's presence, the Apostles could not have evangelized to nonbelievers of Jesus' resurrection.

"Maybe you won't see Jesus appear, but you do see the Holy Spirit in his Christians. They had never been this bold before," said Valone, a parishioner at Guardian Angels Church in Henrietta.

Because the Holy Spirit is meant to be a positive force, Father Laird said, English church texts began to phase out the term "Holy Ghost" in favor of "Holy Spirit" shortly after the Second Vatican Council. He explained that negative connotations attached to the word "ghost" in modern English precipitated this change.

### Preparing for the jubilee

The year 2000 has been targeted by the pope as "The Great Jubilee," during which he plans to lead a worldwide ecumenical celebration. He asked Catholics to consider 1998 as the Year of the Holy Spirit, as well as contemplate on Jesus Christ in 1997 and God the Father in 1999.

In 1998, the pope has called for reflection by Catholics in several areas. He was especially emphatic about reflecting on the virtue of hope, as well as making a special devotion to the Virgin Mary.

Other areas of reflection included awareness of responsibility to the environment; efforts to restore peace and justice in strife-torn parts of the world; reconcilia-

tion and solidarity among all peoples; acceptance of charisms; promotion of the laity; promotion of Christian unity; dialogue with other religions and contemporary culture; and a deeper understanding of Vatican II documents.

Connie Cirre, wife of Robert, said she is hoping for at least 500 people from this diocese to attend the Upstate New York Convention in the Holy Spirit this fall in Syracuse. Although Cirre noted that "the Holy Spirit has been encompassed in the charismatic community more than anywhere," she added that the conference welcomes all Catholics.

"The pope is saying the Holy Spirit should encompass the whole church," Cirre said.

She added that the conference's facilitator, Father Regis Rodda, OFM Conv., of Syracuse, will celebrate a charismatic Mass June 17 at St. John Fisher College.

Although the Year of the Holy Spirit is evident in diocesanwide efforts, Rinefierd speculated that a similar level of activity is not likely to occur at the parish level.

"With strategic planning and the Synod going on, parishes have little extra energy to do much specific programming," Rinefierd explained.

On the other hand, Father Laird said that Pastoral Planning for the New Millennium and Synod implementation are most certainly dependent on the Spirit moving through various groups of diocesan Catholics.

"In a very real sense, there very well could be a relationship drawn between what is going on in our diocesan community, and the Holy Spirit's evidence in the dynamics," Father Laird said.

Bunce agreed that although the Holy Spirit's presence can be hard to visualize, it definitely makes its presence felt.

"It's nothing you can see, but you know. Jesus comes alive through the Holy Spirit," Bunce said. "But isn't our faith, also, something we can't see or touch?"

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